

LIFELINES

DECEMBER, 2018

RIAFG NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Corner

It's easy for me to lose my focus during the holidays. Christmas decorations have been in the stores in some cases since before Halloween. It feels more like the season of trying to figure out gifts for people who already have an abundance. This is all stuff. Yes, there is some thought behind it but it is still stuff.

Carrying the message involves giving - giving of time, emotions, sharing, listening. This cannot be packaged up. This involves intangible stuff. It is not passive. I can make it seem so complicated, but it is not all that complicated. Dropping off Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism at doctors' offices, libraries, churches is not complicated. Showing up is not complicated. Sharing at a meeting is not complicated. Greeting a newcomer is not complicated. All of this in and of itself is not complicated until it gets locked inside my head. I have learned in Al-Anon to break stuff that feels overwhelming into small steps. Do one thing and then go on to the next right thing.

I have to be very aware of my expectations for the holidays. I am responsible for how I enjoy this season. And I have learned I have choices. I have to surrender to some of the difficult emotions of this time of year. They don't stay stuffed. But I also need to bracket them, put a boundary around them, so that they don't swallow me up. Al-Anon has taught me so much. I can say, "No" or "Yes" to an invitation. I can choose to bake or to buy. I can choose to ignore "robo" calls. I don't have to answer a ringing phone. It's a convenience, not an obligation. I can end an unpleasant conversation by choosing words that say what I mean but are not mean. I can have friends over and throw all my craziness about "perfect" into my God box where it belongs. I have spent too much energy worrying and trying to accomplish "perfect" and it has only served to isolate and frustrate me.

So, sometimes the only way I can give back is to suit up and show up. When I first came to Al-Anon I had nothing left to give. I was exhausted on so many levels and you said that all I had to do was go to meetings. I didn't have to do anything then, but show up, shut up and listen. But this doesn't last forever. Now I feel that I have received so much and it is my responsibility to expend some effort and give back. Where would I be today if everyone decided they were too busy to get to a meeting? I am so grateful that was not my experience. So, I show up so that a newcomer won't arrive at an empty room. Now more than any other season that is so important.

A grateful member of Al-Anon,
Elaine H.
Lifelines Editor

Would you like to be on the distribution list for Lifelines? Send an email requesting this to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com. These are sent as "BCC's" so your anonymity is protected. Do you have a story or an Al-Anon event to share? Would you like to share why your home group is so special to you? Would you like to share yo? Please email these to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com

Meeting Notices:

HOLIDAY CHANGE***

These are the latest changes as of the December Issue publishing date. Please check the riaafg.org website for any additional updates.

Tuesday Cranston/Warwick Daytime Al-Anon - 10 AM - We **WILL NOT MEET on Dec 25th (Christmas Day)**. We **WILL MEET** on Jan 1st (New Year's Day)

The Al-Anon at Noon group in Westerly at Christ Episcopal Church **WILL MEET on December 24th**. It will **NOT MEET on December 26th**. It **WILL meet on December 31st and WILL meet on January 2nd**.

Jamestown Live and Let Live **WILL MEET on December 24th and December 31st** at the Grange on 6 West St., Jamestown.

Wakefield Just For Today **WILL NOT MEET on December 24th** and it **WILL MEET on December 31st**.

Al-Anon Works If You Work It group in E. Greenwich on Tuesday Mornings **WILL NOT MEET on December 25th nor on January 1st**.

Charlestown New Life, Cross' Mills Baptist Church, **WILL MEET on December 25th and January 1st**.

NEEDS SUPPORT

Cranston/Warwick Day Time Al-Anon, Tuesday at 10:00 AM at Edgewood Congregational Church 1788 Broad St., Cranston.

South County Step meeting, Thursday from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM needs your support.

Let It All Go AFG, Tuesday 7:30 PM, North Kingstown Methodist Church, 450 Boston Neck Rd., North Kingstown

Keep It Simple Saturday K.I.S.S. on Saturdays at 1200 PM, Ray Hall, 2nd floor, Room 4, Butler Hospital, 345 Blackstone Blvd, Providence

Higher Powered Lunch Bunch on Tuesdays at 12:10 PM at St. Stephen's Church, 114 George St., 2nd floor, Providence.

LOCATION CHANGE

Westerly Friday Night AFG is now meeting at Grace United Methodist Church, 10 Park Ave., Westerly.

MEETING CLOSURE

A New Beginning, Thursdays at 7:00 PM at St. Paul's in Portsmouth has closed.

Upcoming Events:

- Dec 2, 2018 Service Task Force Meeting from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM at Brewed Awakenings Coffee House, 1316 Bald Hill Rd., Warwick. All are welcome to attend. Discussion on remainder of Service Break out questions.
- Dec 16, 2018 East Side Alateen 3rd Anniversary Celebration from 7:00 to 8:00 PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Benevolent St., Providence. Alateen, Al-Anon and AA speakers, pot luck.
- Jan 8, 2019 Charlestown New Life Anniversary Celebration, Cross' Mills Baptist Church, Charlestown. Potluck at 6:00 PM. Al-Anon, AA speakers and meeting from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM. See flyer.
- Jan 12, 2019 AWSC meeting at Cranston Office, 106 Rolf Street, Cranston 10:00 AM to Noon
- Mar 22-24, 2019 Rhode Island AA Convention with Al-Anon participation. See flyer.

Anniversary Celebrations:

Alateen's 3rd Anniversary Meeting



**(Potluck , Guest speakers &
Fellowship!)**

**Sunday December 16th
7pm-8pm**

**@ First Unitarian Church of
Providence. - 1 Benevolent St**

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS SPECIAL EVENT!

Please come join us as we celebrate our anniversary

Charlestown New Life



Where: Cross' Mills Baptist Church
4403 Rd. Old Post Rd., Charlestown
(next to the Cross' Mills Library)

When: Tuesday, January 8th,
6-8:30 PM

Details: Pot luck at 6 PM, speakers at 7 PM and fellowship.

Pot luck will be in the basement of the church.....

and speakers in the main hall.



Need more info? Contact Elaine at lifelines.riafg@gmail.com

RIAFG Web Site Issue Resolution:

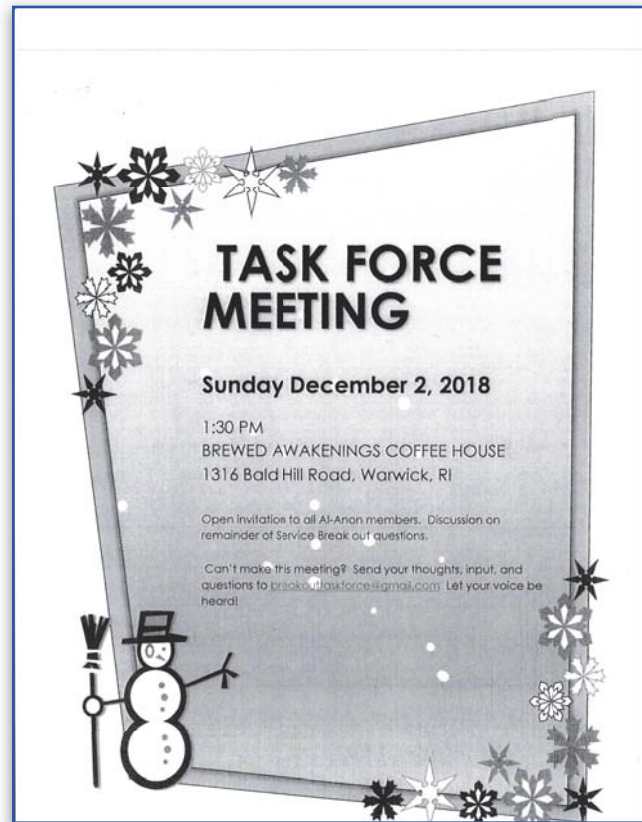
At the Fall Assembly a new Website Coordinator was elected. After 2 hours of training, he has assumed the duties of the position.

During the training session, I told him about the iPhone users problem with viewing the Events Calendar on their phones. As we were discussing the issue, he began looking at the html code and came up with a fix. You now can see the full calendar on your iPhone by rotating your phone so that you are viewing the calendar in "landscape."

Phyllis H.
Area Chair

Task Force News:

The spring assembly generated a request from the Group Representatives that a task force be created for further discussion on the service break out questions. These questions affect our RI Al-anon groups. Whether you are a newcomer, old timer, or anywhere in between we invite you to join us for fellowship and input. **The next meeting is December 2, 2018 from 1:30 to 3:30 PM at the Brewed Awakenings Coffee Shop at 1316 Bald Hill Rd., Warwick.** We will be discussing the first three breakout questions: **What works? What motivated you to step up to service? What doesn't work? All are welcome to attend.** For more information email breakouttaskforce@gmail.com



New Committee: RIAFG Safe Meetings Procedure

In Al-Anon we are blessed to have meeting spaces where we can “place principals before personalities” and attend and share safely. Unfortunately, there are rare instances in which meetings are confronted with threatening or unstable behavior that disrupts members’ safety. At the Fall Area Assembly, Group Representatives voted to create a committee charged with drafting a statewide safety procedure to support meetings faced with such situations. While we are fortunate to have some models of other states’ procedures, we want to ensure our procedures meet Rhode Island members’ needs. If you have a suggestion or comment on this matter, please email the committee at riafg.safemeetings@gmail.com so that we can include your experience, strength, and hope in our efforts.

*****Any Al-Anon member can send feedback, join, or request clarification from any of the task forces that are currently addressing the Spring Assembly service breakout findings, group safety issues, and the Do not refer/re-refer policy creation. Above are the emails for two of the committees. For now any questions, concerns for the Do not refer/re-refer policy can be sent to lifelines.riafg@gmail.com and I will forward them.

Area Literature News:

Due to demand another order of the new [Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships](#) has been placed. Please call the area office in Cranston to find out when they will be available for sale.

Anne-Marie, RIAFG Literature Coordinator

AA Liaison:

I attended the monthly AA Area 61 meeting in November. The AA Convention committee members liked the Al-Anon flyer for the convention. Several AA members took a copy to distribute at their AA group and/or Al-Anon sister groups. The AA Convention theme is "Our Big Book: Saving Lives Since 1939." The Dates are Mar. 22 – 24, 2018 at the Gurney's Resort in Newport. Register before March 8 cost is \$25.00. Register on or after March 9 cost is \$30.00. Register online (preferred) or download the printable registration form at www.aainir.com.

Eloy M. from Colorado, Panel 56 delegate will serve as our Al-Anon speaker at the March convention. His sharing is powerful! He spoke at the WSO Conference this spring. Eloy will speak on Saturday, March 23, in the morning during the convention.

Attached is the Al-Anon flyer for the AA Convention. Please consider distributing this to your groups. Al-Anon meeting titles will be included in the AA Convention program and on display at the convention. Thank you to those who have volunteered to lead an Al-Anon meeting, and I welcome additional volunteers for the remaining two meetings.

Yours in Service and Fellowship,
Jackie G.
AA Liaison

Fall Assembly

Highlights



The Area Fall Assembly was hosted by District 3 on October 20th in Newport, RI. Twenty-six Al-Anon members were in attendance and 18 groups were represented by their GR or a proxy. We began the day with a fun "getting to Know You" game and then got down to business.

A representative of the Service Task Force presented a report on the results of their first meeting. After considerable discussion, the GRs voted to table a vote on the report, preferring to vote on a complete report of the Task Force when it is completed and presented at Assembly. The Task Force has scheduled the next meeting for December 2nd. All Al-Anon members are encouraged to attend and contribute to the discussion.

The Delegate led discussions on two topics: "Do Not Refer Policy/Re-Refer Policy" and "Internet and Group Safety Issues." After discussion of both topics, the GRs voted to form two Task Forces. The first Task Force is charged with developing Area Policies on 'Do Not Refer' and 'Re-Refer'. The second Task Force will develop a guideline or procedure for groups when dealing with safety issues.

The open Area Service positions were discussed and described in the morning session. In the afternoon, elections were held and the following area positions were elected by majority vote: Archives Coordinator, Area Alateen Process Person, Email Coordinator, Lifelines Editor, Office Coordinator, and Website Coordinator. We will be starting 2019 with only 5 vacant Area positions: Alternate Delegate, Secretary, Forum Coordinator, Public Outreach, and 2019 Workshop Coordinator.

Phyllis H.
Area Chair

AA CONVENTION WITH AL-ANON PARTICIPATION

Five Al-Anon meetings will be available. Please consider leading one – a great way to serve! Meeting leaders are responsible for the \$25.00 registration fee. Registration: <https://aainri.com/convention/>

SPECIAL NOTE: ELOY M., our AL-ANON guest speaker will give his talk on Sat., Mar. 23 at 10:15 am.

Al-Anon Meetings CAL = Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature






Sat., Mar. 23 at 9:00 am: **Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism - Nel P.**
Suggested CAL - Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism pamphlet

Sat., Mar. 23 at 11:30 am: **How Al-Anon helped save my life? - Barbara H.**
Suggested CAL - You pick and share your personal story.

Sat., Mar. 23 at 2:30 pm: **Al-Anon Slogans - How they help us.**
Suggested CAL - Any daily reader, How Al-Anon Works pgs. 65 -75

Sat., Mar. 23 at 5:00 pm: **Al-Anon Fellowship -Breaking Our Isolation - Heather M.**
Suggested CAL - From Survival to Recovery pgs. 13, 18, 23, etc. or Concept Four

Sun., Mar. 24 at 8:30 am: **How I practice the Al-Anon Twelve Steps in My Daily Life.**
Suggested CAL - Paths to Recovery, Daily Readers or How Al-Anon Works

If you would like to lead a meeting, please contact Jackie G. by email: aa.riafg@gmail.com or leave a message at our Area Office phone number, (401) 781-0044.

Parking is FREE and available at the hotel, though it's limited. The hotel offers valet parking @ \$20.00 per night. We have a FREE trolley that runs from the Newport Visitors Center parking lot (there will be a sign) 23 Americas Cup Ave from, Friday, March 22, 6-8:00 pm, 9:30-midnight & Saturday, March 23, 8am-8pm, 9:30-midnight: <https://www.discovernewport.org/about-newport/visitor-center/>

Fall Workshop: Sharing the Gift

As we approach this season of Gift Giving we would like to look back to the 2018 Fall Workshop theme: Sharing the Gift.

We asked attendees if they would share stories of the gifts they've received from Sponsorship in a small can situated on each table. Our personal relationships are the gifts from our hearts that we share throughout the year. Perhaps these remembrances will be just the right gift we need this season.

Giving truth, trust, & support

My sponsor gave me permission to be: me, feel, connect with a higher power, not write the story and to trust, trust, trust.

My sponsor is the one person who knows everything about me. I often share with her what's going on before I share with my husband. I trust her implicitly.

When a gift is freely given unexpectedly

I came back to the Al-Anon program 3 years ago after having been out of the program for a few years. I knew I needed a sponsor. I approached a long-timer – really hopeful she would say yes. She said no. A few weeks later, I asked another woman to sponsor me and she too said no. Feeling defeated and unworthy I almost didn't ask a person again. A few months passed, and I mustered the courage and asked one more woman. She too – awfully and sadly said no. About a year later, I happened to call a woman to remind her she was chairing. We began conversing and out of the blue she offered to be my sponsor. What I realized, it was a higher power thing. The women I chose – I was choosing with my disease, my higher power chose.

The gift of our own clarity

There was one girl that wanted me to be her sponsor. She loved the program. I tried to call her, but she never came back. I used to be so angry at her. "Why didn't she come back?" I thought I did something wrong. But now I know she wasn't ready, but I was.

What gives me great joy in sponsoring a newcomer are the changes that I can recognize even before they know they can FLY!

I have a sponsor and I sponsor others. Every time I "should" be calling my sponsor ... a sponsee calls me. I am so grateful.

In the process of explaining Al-Anon ideas to my sponsee, my own understanding of these concepts is reinforced and strengthened. Formulating words helps the understanding take shape.

With Thanks for your Participation & Service,

Holly R.
2018 Workshop Chairperson
Rhode Island Al-Anon Family Groups
workshop.riafg@gmail.com

Area Chair's Corner:

As we approach the end of 2018, I want to take this opportunity to thank the following out-going Area World Service Committee (AWSC) members for their service: Joy C., Area Alateen Process Person; Dennis S., Email Coordinator; Shawn J., District 1 Representative; and Holly R., 2018 Workshop Coordinator.

I also want to welcome the following newly elected AWSC members: Haley C., Archives Coordinator; Susan L., Area Alateen Process Person; Lori G., Email Coordinator; and Esme H., Website Coordinator. In addition, Elaine H. was re-elected to a new 3-year term as Lifelines Editor and Jane A. was re-elected to a new 3-year term as Office Coordinator.

I look forward to working with the continuing and newly elected officers and coordinators in 2019.

Phyllis H.
Area Chair

Members Share:

My Thanksgiving Story

Thanksgiving morning on my way to the train station, I realized that I had forgotten my book at home. Knowing that I was going to be on the train for a long time, I decided to turn around and go home to fetch my book.

I thought I had enough time. However, on my way back to the station, I realized I had made an error in my math. I was short 5 minutes.

I ran from where I parked to the platform calling out, "Is the train running on time?" I heard a faint "Yes." I replied, "Please tell the conductor that there is one straggler coming." You see at Kingston, the south bound track requires one to go up 2 flights of stairs, cross over the tracks and then down 2 flights of stairs.

A woman shouted to me, "You've got 2 and a half minutes. Run!" Which I did and much to my amazement, she came up from the other side to the top of the last 2 flights down. She grabbed one of my bags and we ran down the steps.

Her traveling companion stood on the platform with her foot in the train keeping the door open until we both got on board.

It was such a touching experience, that I floated all the way to Delaware! And yes, it was a happy Thanksgiving.

Heather M.

Forum Article:

I Was Finally Able to Be Me

As my husband's drinking got worse, I found myself drifting away from my friends because I didn't want them to see what was going on. I stopped inviting people to the house because I wasn't sure what mood he would be in, and I stopped accepting invitations because I wasn't sure what I would come home to. I thought if I were at home, maybe he wouldn't drink or at least not drink so much.

One day I realized I didn't have any close friends anymore —no one I could really confide in or be myself with. I was always pretending things were wonderful when in fact, they weren't. What an exhausting way to live!

Then I found Al-Anon. At first, I was frightened about walking into a room full of strangers and discussing the intimate details of my life, especially since I had gotten so good at hiding them. But all I really had to do was walk into the room, take a seat and listen. I noted the word friendship in the welcome:

"We welcome you...and hope you will find in this fellowship the help
and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy."

I soon discovered that the people there felt less like strangers once I realized the common bond we shared. I also discovered that I would not find a more kindhearted, caring group of people on earth than at an Al-Anon meeting.

Slowly I have learned that I can drop the pretense of a perfect life and let people see the real me. I haven't gotten all my old friends back, but that's okay because I now have a new group of friends who truly understand me and with whom I can be myself.

By Jeri. D., Wisconsin

Reprinted from The Forum, issue May 2018, Al-Anon Family Group Hdqtr., Inc., Virginia Beach, VA.)**Editor's Note: Would you like your own subscription to the "Forum?" A subscription form is in the back of all issues. The cost is \$11.00 per year and there is also an online version available.

Area Office News:**Volunteers Needed**

The Area Office still needs volunteers! Please consider giving back by volunteering for hours in the office or as a volunteer from your home. Both positions have training.

Office volunteers responsibilities:

- Greet anyone who calls the office
- Greet visitors to the office. They are usually coming for literature.
- Retrieve recorded messages, return calls and record them in our log.
- Open and distribute the mail
- Fill literature orders for in-person purchasers.

At home volunteers responsibilities:

- Access the AI-Anon voicemail account from their home phone, retrieving messages
- When the caller leaves a message and a number, the at home volunteer calls them back
- Mailing a meeting list or referring the caller to riafg.org
- Keep a brief written log of calls returned and communicate with the Office Coordinator

Please call the office for more information and/or to volunteer!

Jane A., RIAFG office coordinator

We currently have 4 Volunteers: Here is the schedule:

Monday:	12:30 to 2:30 PM	Phyllis H.
Wednesday:	12:30 to 2:30 PM	Paul B.
Thursday:	6:00 to 7:30 PM	Jane A.
At-Home Volunteer:	Tuesday	Clara R.

AWSC News:**Seeking Volunteer(s) to Explore Alternative AWSC Office Locations**

At the last AWSC meeting on November 17, 2018, a concern was brought up regarding the location of our current area office at 106 Rolfe Street, in Cranston. Two primary issues: the lack of parking and no handicapped access. **We need a volunteer (or two!) to help research alternative spaces.**

Currently the rent is \$395.00 per month which includes heat, AC and internet. The office also pays approximately \$20.00 for electricity and \$54.00 for phone service per month. The new space needs two rooms, one for our literature/office space and one for meeting space. We need approximately 450 to 500 square feet of space. Also, we need to have parking, for 12 cars or so, or ample on street parking space because people come to meetings every Thursday and to regular AWSC meetings at the office too. Anyone who has an interest in working on finding a new space should contact Jane, the office manager, at office.riafg@gmail.com or Phyllis, the Area chair at chair.riafg@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for your service. We simply can't do this important service work without people like you.

Group Inventory

At the last AWSC meeting on November 17th, the team addressed a question regarding having a group inventory to explore what we need to change, improve, etc. From feedback received from our Assemblies, a concern regarding the AWSC "running everything" was communicated. The inventory will address better ways to communicate what and how the ASWC operates, as well as what we do not do. This inventory will occur at the end of June, 2019. We are looking for feedback from group members who have conducted a group inventory. How and where did you have the inventory? What issues were addressed? What were the results of the inventory? If you have had this experience and would like to share it with the AWSC, or if you have issues that you would like to be addressed at the AWSC inventory, please email Phyllis, the Area Chair at chair.riafg@gmail.com. We need your feedback and ideas as this is your AWSC!

What Is a Group Inventory?

“Taking an inventory of the group helps to keep it healthy and invigorated. Groups are encouraged to make a periodic review using the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service as the guiding principles for the inventory. Members can use the inventory to discuss new service opportunities and address minor or major concerns before the group’s unity is disrupted. The Guideline “Taking a Group Inventory (G-8a & 8B) is a useful tool that can aid in this process.” (AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018 - 2021, page52)

District II News:

What’s NEWs in District II – September 2018

Once a month, District II meets for about an hour at a named location to unite the individual groups within the district. Topics range from informing groups of news from the Area or World Service levels to planning program-related events for fun, fellowship, and sometimes fundraising. District meetings also coordinate service and public outreach projects and as such are a great way to learn more about or get involved in service. As a start, District II will continue to bring its news to you!

District II starting rotating its meeting location back in September in an effort to encourage participation and service. This month’s district meeting was held at Wakefield Baptist Church one hour before the South County Step Meeting. (And as a side note, both meetings were very well attended that night!)

The District Meeting started off by addressing 3 “old business” items: (1) Discussing two versions of the Guidelines and Suggestions regarding District Representatives and District Meetings (both on the AI-Anon website); (2) The attending Group Representatives (GRs) reported that the information presented at last month’s meeting regarding group membership and voting at business meetings was, or will be, discussed at their business meetings; and (3) The GRs also reported that all the groups they represent were working on baskets for the Fall Workshop.

The Alternate District Rep reported on several Area News items including: (1) the summary sheet of the evaluation done at the last assembly; (2) the state, Area 49, budget; (3) the summary of each group’s donations to the Area; (4) the service breakouts on questions raised at the last Area assembly; and (5) the resulting Task Force (open to all), which met on Sunday September 30th at 1 PM at the Coffee Connection, 1744 Mineral Spring Avenue, North Providence. It was noted that District II will be hosting the next Area Assembly and should be a future agenda item.

In new business, the District Rep suggested using Lifelines as the major conduit for much information. Instead of sending several emails, a bulleted list of important things for GRs to note at their meetings (while referring to Lifelines) could be sent from the District Level. In this way, members would be reminded to sign up for Lifelines. One member shared that announcing at meetings that she would take anyone’s email address and sent it to Lifelines was working very well to encourage sign ups.

Finally, the Lifelines Coordinator asked if we could publish the approved minutes from the previous month’s district meeting. Everyone agreed to publish the August minutes before deciding on a format to use for publication moving forward. The question of whether or not to use member’s first names in the published report arose, and the group decided to give this question a month of prayer and meditation and to revisit it at next month’s meeting.

If any District II groups would be willing to host a future District Meeting, please contact the District II Rep. Thanks for reading, and we hope to see you at a future meeting!

Links of Service

Member + Member = **Group**
Group + **Group** = **District**
District + **District** = **Assembly**
Assembly + **Assembly** = **Conference**

News from the WSO:

Order Now: Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2019 (AFA)

The WSO is now accepting orders for *AFA 2019* second printing magazines. You can get yours by:

Placing orders on line from the WSO store at al-anon.org/afa2019

Downloading an order form at al-anon.org/afaform

Faxing the WSO at 757-563-1656 or

Mailing to 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

Stretch your gratitude for Al-Anon into the new year by using *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA) 2019* magazines to carry our message to families and friends of alcoholics who receive services from professionals. Locations accessible to the public, such as libraries, also welcome *AFA* magazines to inform the public about the effects of alcoholism on the family. This is your opportunity to carry and share the message of hope with families and friends of alcoholics.

The deadline to order *AFA 2019* magazines is February 11, 2019, 5 PM ET.

2020 Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism

The WSO is already working on the 2020 issue of the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine. A copy of the AFA Members Writer's Guide is attached to this message with our request to include it in a future issue of your Area Newsletter. The WSO accepts AFA sharings from members throughout the year.

The AFA Writer's Guide explains what is needed for an AFA sharing (50 to 300 words) to help inform families of alcoholics and anyone unfamiliar with Al-Anon or Alateen about our program. It is important to remember that AFA is intended to motivate families of alcoholics to start attending Al-Anon. Stories can include:

- Why or how difficult it was to go to your first meeting-what helped you take that first big step?
- What was your first meeting like and what did you hear that helped you to decide to keep coming back?
- How is Al-Anon helping you and making a difference in your life?

Stories can also be submitted online, www.al-anon.org/sharings.

Thanks for helping the WSO to inform the fellowship that their stories for AFA are needed and appreciated to carry our message of hope to families of alcoholics who have yet to attend their first Al-Anon meeting.

Yours in fellowship,

Claire R. WSO Associate Director-Professionals

Writing Guideline

Without member sharings, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, our most comprehensive annual public outreach magazine, wouldn't be possible. Within the last year, Al-Anon members have distributed nearly 400,000 copies throughout the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico. Please help us continue to make this the most successful member participation outreach project in our history!

Please consider writing a few words about any of the bulleted items (word count: 50 – 300). Other suggestions for topics: Remembering how difficult it was to go to your first meeting—what helped you take that first big step? Did you hear anything early on that made you want to come back? You have something to say to a potential newcomer that will help them find their way to us and we want to hear it. Remembering what it was like to be a newcomer may inspire you to write the words that will resonate with a potential member.

The goals of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* are:

to help potential Al-Anon members get past the obstacles we typically face before we reach out for help, i.e., denial; not wanting to rock the boat; shame and embarrassment to let people know there is a drinking problem; the “myth” that Al-Anon Family Groups is religious; resentment that “they” have a problem, not me, etc.

to let potential members know that we understand

to give comfort and offer a possible solution

to give potential members basic information about Al-Anon and Alateen and let them know we'll be there if and when they want help.

Request for Sharings for Newcomers

Please consider writing an article for people who are considering attending their first meeting, but uncertain as to whether they qualify for membership in Al-Anon. In 300 words or less, please share what it was like for you as a newcomer. You may wish to focus on: What it was like before Al-Anon and what led you to your first meeting; The first slogan or program idea that had particular significance for you; What kept you coming back after your first meeting.

Whatever brought you to Al-Anon, let your story benefit someone else who has yet to experience the gifts of hope and peace that Al-Anon offers

Please submit your sharings to *The Forum*, 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617; or to wso@al-anon.org, or to al-anon.org/18forumshare.

“Newcomer Preparedness Checklist”

With the holiday season on the horizon, October through December is the busiest time of the year for many people. It is also a period of added stress, especially for families and friends of alcoholics. It is an opportunity to remind us to prepare ourselves and our groups to welcome newcomers who find their way to Al-Anon..

The holiday season can be a challenging time for families and friends of alcoholics, and even more so for those who have not yet found Al-Anon. Putting a plan in place to welcome newcomers throughout the season will help both newcomers and members alike.

Here are a few things to keep in mind for your “Newcomer Preparedness Checklist”:

- Specific meeting location instructions:
 - Is there a special door to gain access to the building?
 - Is there a sign pointing to the right room for the meeting?
 - Are parking instructions needed?
 - Are special instructions needed for late arrivals, e.g., “After 7:00 pm, ring buzzer by door.”
 - Are instructions clear enough for out-of-town visitors not familiar with your community?
- First contact: Is there a volunteer from the group to be a “greeter” for those attending your Al-Anon/Alateen meeting for the first time?
- Al-Anon Newcomer Packets: Is there an ample supply?
- Al-Anon/Alateen pamphlets and books: Is it time to reorder? Check supplies.
- Public outreach materials: Always a good idea to have a few *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazines on hand.
- Meeting schedule: Is it updated? Are there enough copies available?
- Most importantly, please make sure that your **meeting information** is up to date, not just on the local meeting schedule, but on the AIS, Area and WSO websites as well. When newcomers, looking for help, call or search online for meeting information, they will know where and when to find your group. We want everyone to feel welcome in our Al-Anon and Alateen meetings!

Al-Anon Contacts for the Inmate Correspondence Service (ICS) Needed!

The Inmate Correspondence Service connects incarcerated Al-Anon members with members who attend Al-Anon meetings regularly. When an inmate and an Inmate Contact exchange letters, they share their experiences and understanding of the Al-Anon program, as well as the ways in which they apply the Al-Anon principles to their daily lives.

Male inmates are assigned to male Al-Anon Contacts and female inmates to female Al-Anon Contacts.

Inmates send their letters to the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (the World Service Office [WSO]). The WSO then forwards the letters to the Contacts.

Al-Anon Contacts do not reveal their full names or home addresses. They can use the WSO as their return address.

The Al-Anon Contact’s anonymity is maintained at all times. For further information, please contact us at wso@al-anon.org or Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., at 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617.

Help Make Al-Anon's Next Daily Reader Something Special

Al-Anon's three Legacies: the Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service, are the foundation of our program. Please help the New Daily Reader, working title, be the first Al-Anon daily reader to include sharings on all 3 by submitting your thoughts on any of them.

Type al-anon.org/sharing in your browser to submit your sharings.

WEB Sites, Addresses and phone numbers:

**RI AFG: www.riafg.org Office: 106 Rolfe St., Cranston, RI 02910
Telephone: 401-781-0044. Office hours available by calling this number.**

**WSO: al-anon.org. Office: 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway,
Virginia Beach, VA 23454. Telephone: 757-563-1600**

God, grant me the serenity to accept the the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.

Photo by TH

